CALIFORNIA MARINE LIFE PROTECTION ACT INITIATIVE
MASTER PLAN SCIENCE ADVISORY TEAM
MARCH 2, 2006 MEETING SUMMARY
San Jose State Building, Alquist Auditorium
100 Paseo de San Antonio
San Jose, CA 95113

SAT members present: Loo Botsford, Mark Carr, Steve Gaines, Doyle Hanan, Jeff Paduan, Stephen Palumbi, Linwood Pendleton, Kenneth Schiff, Susan Schlosser, Astrid Scholz, Rick Starr, Mary Yoklavich

SAT members not present: Rikk Kvitek, Steven Murray, Mark Ohman, Kevin Piner, Dave Schaub, William Sydeman, Dean Wendt

Others present: Dr. Steve Barrager (SAT consultant), Rita Bunzel (MLPA staff), Michael DeLapa (MLPA staff), Evan Fox (MLPA staff), Heather Galindo (note taker; SAT support staff), John J. Kirlin (MLPA staff), Dr. Mary Gleason (MLPA staff), Paul Reilly (DFG staff), and approximately 10 members of the public

Acronyms used: California Department of Fish and Game (DFG), California Fish and Game Commission (F&GC), Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA), marine protected area (MPA), MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF), MLPA Master Plan Framework (MPF), MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team (SAT), state marine conservation area (SMCA), state marine park (SMP), state marine reserve (SMR), state marine recreational management area (SMRMA)

Welcome, Review of Agenda, and Recent Updates

John Kirlin opened the meeting by welcoming SAT members, staff and members of the public. He reported on the BRTF's January 31-February 1 meeting, at which SAT members presented their evaluation of the proposed packages. Those evaluations continue to be very important to the BRTF and the package proponents, who have since made modifications based on SAT and BRTF feedback. The BRTF requested that MLPA Initiative staff develop a "preferred alternative," which is package S. On February 6, some package proponents met with staff and some SAT members and made revisions to packages 1, 2, and 3. Package AC has not changed.

Two issues came up in this meeting that weren't discussed at the last SAT meeting:

- The U.S. Air Force potentially objecting to MPAs off Vandenberg Air Force Base – the Office of the Secretary for the California Resources Agency and U.S. Department of Defense are having discussions about this issue.
- Kelp lease impacts on protection levels. Packages should go forward and it should be clearly defined what the impact of these leases is for each package.

John Ugoretz, MLPA policy advisor from DFG, is at a F&GC meeting today in Riverside. Paul Reilly is our DFG rep today. Later today we will be talking about changes to the SAT design guidelines in the MPF. The goals for this meeting are to understand the analyses that came out of the SAT evaluation sub-team and to make revisions to presentations; tasks will be to prepare an executive summary and to dry run the presentations that will be given to the BRTF.

That will conclude preparation activities for the March 14-15 BRTF meeting of the whole SAT. However, SAT members presenting at the BRTF meeting will be asked to gather on March 13 to conduct another practice run. At the March meeting, the BRTF will be advancing alternative packages and will also make a recommendation for a preferred alternative. Packages will then go to DFG and ultimately a recommendation will be forwarded to the F&GC.

Mike DeLapa, chair for this meeting, reviewed the meeting agenda.

Analysis of Proposed Central Coast MPA Packages and New Package S

Summary of packages

Mary Gleason gave an overview of the packages including changes since the last versions.

- Existing Central Coast MPAs
    - Package 0, no action alternative
- Internal to CCRSG
    - Packages 1-3, all revised February 9, 2006
- External to CCRSG
    - Package AC, unchanged (December 15, 2005 version)
- MLPA Staff
    - Package S, new package (February 22, 2006)

Package 0 includes 12 MPAs and one special closure and encompasses less than 4% of the study region.

Package 1 now includes 29 MPAs, representing 14.9% of the study region. The overall percentage of the region protected has decreased in this version, primarily because of the elimination of a no-trawl area. The total number and area of SMCAs has decreased, but the number and area of SMRs increased.

Package 2 was revised to try to reduce economic impacts and capture more deep water habitats. The result was a decrease in the total number of MPAs from 33 to 29 and a decrease in the percentage of the study region in MPAs from 23.9% to 19.2%.

Minor adjustments were made to Package 3, also to reduce economic impacts and capture deep habitats. This package now includes 30 MPAs (versus 31 in the December version) and encompasses 17.0% of the study region (a 0.2% decrease from the previous version).

Package AC was unchanged. It proposes 30 MPAs, which encompass 27.3% of the study region.

In late February, MLPA Initiative staff released Package S. It includes 30 MPAs (17 SMRs, 1 SMP, 11 SMCAs, and 1 SMRMA). The SMRMA is a new designation to this process that

would allow hunting of water fowl. The SMRMA is proposed for an area in South Morro Bay. The 30 MPAs would protect 17.8% of the study region.

Packages 1, 2, and 3 have converged somewhat in this latest round of revisions due to the efforts of the proponents to meet guidelines and minimize impacts according to BRTF request. However there are still differences among them, which are driven by ecological and economic tradeoffs and preferences of non-consumptive and consumptive users.

How SAT evaluated packages in relation to MLPA goals

Steve Gaines gave a brief introduction to the SAT evaluation process, explaining that the evaluations of the revised packages were conducted in the same way as previous evaluations.

How packages address MLPA goals 1 and 4

Mark Carr presented results of evaluations that he, Rick Starr and Mary Yoklavich conducted of the packages' performance with respect to goals 1 and 4 of the MLPA. Mark asked the SAT to vet the analyses this subgroup conducted, to review the SAT sub-team summary of goals 1 and 4 document, and to give feedback on their draft presentation to the BRTF.

Presentation:

- Reviewed goals 1 and 4. How well do the packages meet these goals? What are the similarities and differences across packages in meeting these goals?
- This analysis focused on three key questions:
    - How well are habitats represented?
    - How well is representation distributed across the study region?
    - What are the proposed levels of protection to these ecosystems?
- Across the study region, the effects of considering or not considering kelp harvesting are not big at all. Effects are limited to two subregions, but in those subregions the effects are rather pronounced.
- All packages (1, 2, 3, AC, S) increase protection substantially as compared to the status quo (Package 0). However they differ in levels of protection for various habitats.
- All packages provide similar amounts of moderate to high protection. Nearshore shallow habitats (estuarine, sandy beaches, rocky intertidal) receive similar amounts of moderate to high protection across packages.
- Shallow sand habitat (less than 100m depth) is the most common habitat in study region (72%). All packages provide at least moderate protection for >10% of this habitat (88 sq. miles). High protection is provided to a minimum area of 61 square miles.
- Deep sand habitat (>100m depth): Packages 1, 2, 3, and S provide moderate to high protection for 18-26%. Package AC affords moderate to high protection to 34% of deep sand.

- Differences among packages: High (SMR) protection. Packages 1 and 3 provide high protection in SMRs to15% and 16% of kelp habitat, respectively. Packages S, AC, and 2 protect 22, 25 and 28% of kelp in SMRs. This pattern tends to apply at the subregion level too, for subregions that have kelp habitat.
- Packages 2, 3, S, and AC provide moderate to high protection to 24-32% of shallow rock habitat, whereas Package 1 protects 15% of this habitat.
- Packages 2, 3, and S provide similar amounts of moderate to high protection of deep rock habitat (29-31%). Package AC provides more protection to deep habitats, at 39%, while Package 1 provides less, at 23%. Packages 1, 3, and S protect <3% of this habitat in SMRs throughout the study region. This is most notable in the Monterey Bay subregion.
- Shallow and deep canyon habitats are highly localized to particular areas within the stretch of coast from Capitola to Cape San Martin.
- Protection of shallow canyons varies remarkably between packages (4-35%). Shallow canyons are most protected by Package AC and least by Package 1.
- In Monterey Bay, packages 1 and AC protect about twice as much deep canyon habitat as the other packages (~30% vs. 15% in moderate to high protection). Package 2 protects twice as much deep canyon habitat in the subregion between Monterey Breakwater and Point Sur as the other four packages. In the subregion off the Big Sur Coast (subregion 4), packages 1, 3 and S protect 28-32% of deep canyon habitat, compared with 48-51% by packages 2 and AC.
- Matrix of habitat representation: Red means at least 10% of each habitat type exists in SMR. Dark blue is at least 10% in the SMCA high. Light blue has at least 10% in SCMA moderate. If the cell is split, then two protection types lend to 10% level.
- Regardless of kelp harvest considerations, at least 10% of each habitat type is represented at the moderate to high protection levels by all packages across the study region, with a few notable exceptions.
- Similarly, at least 15% of most habitat types in most subregions is represented at moderate to high levels by packages 2, AC and S. Package 1 does not represent shallow rock and kelp at this level across all subregions. Package 3 does not represent kelp at this level across all subregions.
- Considering kelp harvest, when 20% of the available habitat is protected at moderate to high levels, the number and types of habitats represented are much fewer, but similar for all packages across the study region. None of the packages provide this level of protection to most habitats in the San Martin to Point Estero subregion. By contrast, most habitats have 20% representation in moderate to high protection in the Point Sur to San Martin region. In general, shallow rock is much less represented in Package 1. Only Package S achieves kelp representation in most subregions at this level.
- If you disregard kelp harvest at the 20% representation level, the only changes occur in the San Martin to Point Estero subregion, where packages 2, 3 and S would now provide moderate to high levels of protection to rocky intertidal, shallow rock and kelp habitats.

- At 30% you see lots of habitats being lost, but they are lost across the packages. Packages 2, AC, and S continue to represent more habitat types than packages 1 and 3. This happens most notably for subregion 4.
- When you take kelp harvesting into consideration, the biggest impact is in two subregions (and MPAs). Off Año Nuevo there is a lease for hand harvest of kelp. If there is an SMR proposed here, it is then shifted to an SMCA moderate for level of protection. Importantly, the proposed SMRs around Año Nuevo are huge, so re-designating those as SMCAs for level of protection has a huge impact on the level of protection for that subregion. In subregion 5, the Ken Norris SMR overlaps with a kelp lease for mechanical harvesting so this would change a proposed SMR to an SMCA low. Again, there is a substantial change in the area for that level of protection for that subregion. However, across the entire study region, the greatest change is 8% for one package and 0% for other packages.

Feedback and discussion

The SAT discussed the effect of the kelp leases, particularly for Año Nuevo, where the area of kelp bed and potential harvest is very small relative to the overall size of the proposed SMR. The SAT sub-team members who conducted the analysis explained that applying a standard rule that changed the protection level of the entire MPA seemed to them to be the only fair and objective way to deal with this issue. However, they agree that the impact of kelp harvest, particularly for Año Nuevo, is likely to be small, and so changing the protection level of the whole MPA may misrepresent the actual impact.

How packages address MLPA goals 2 and 6

Steve Gaines presented results of evaluations he conducted of the packages' performance with respect to goals 2 and 6 of the MLPA, and specifically the degree to which the proposed MPAs meet the MPF guidelines for size and spacing.

Presentation:

- The packages have converged quite dramatically in terms of their size and spacing performance.
- To evaluate size, we considered all MPAs that are touching each other to be a single cluster.
- For size, we looked at both shoreline length and area (converting the SAT shoreline length guidelines into area measures).
- First, ignoring levels of protection (i.e., including all MPAs), we see that the vast majority of the MPA clusters meet SAT guidelines for length. This is a substantial change from previous versions. This analysis includes the MPAs that are within estuaries, though the maximum size of an estuarine MPA is necessarily constrained by the size of the estuary.

- Next, if there were parts of an MPA cluster with lower protection, then that portion was excluded from the area. If you only consider high protection (SMR and SMCA-high) MPAs, the vast majority of all clusters still meet the minimum length guidelines. Package proponents achieved this by dropping small MPAs and increasing the size of others.
- In the public comment period, there was concern about representing these data using proportions, so we also report the raw numbers of MPA clusters that are below, at or above the minimum shoreline length. The vast majority meet the guidelines.
- We also looked at size by comparing the area of MPA clusters to the SAT guideline (translated into area). Again, the majority of clusters meet the guidelines. Estuaries are included here, though in some cases the total size of the estuary is smaller than the SAT threshold minimum size. The expectation is that not all MPAs will meet the guidelines either because of their stated goals or because it is impossible, such as with estuaries. The SAT should consider whether estuaries should be removed from this analysis.
- When we consider just the high protection MPAs (SMR and SMCA-high), Package 1 is the only one with less than half of its MPA clusters meeting this standard. This is because Package 1 has larger MPAs with lower levels of protection.
- All of the preceding analysis was done without considering kelp leases. If we do take them into account, it doesn't make a big difference for this analysis. Generally in all packages except Package 1, one MPA is lost that was below the minimum size (Cambria SMR) and one is lost that was above the minimum guideline (Año Nuevo SMR).
- The next piece of analysis addressed the breakdown by habitat, asking: How many MPAs meeting the guidelines for size and high protection (SMRs and SMCA highs) in each package contain a significant amount of each habitat?
- When you drop some high protection MPAs because of kelp leases, the number of MPAs that represent each habitat in an adequately sized, high protection MPA drops by an average number of 1 across all habitats.
- For the 10 habitats where there is enough replication across the region to do the analysis, we examined the spacing of high protection MPAs in each of the packages relative to the SAT guideline for maximum spacing of 30-60 miles. These habitats include sandy beach, rocky intertidal, surfgrass/eelgrass, sand (0-30m), sand (30-100m), sand (>100m), kelp forest, rock (0-30m), rock (30-100m), and upwelling centers. There were substantially larger gaps in previous versions of the packages. For two habitats, rock (30-100m) and upwelling centers, the closest possible spacing, given their distributions within the region, is 90 miles, not 60.
- There is an error in the spacing summary slide: for Package 1 the third value should read 1 not 2.
- Considering kelp leases resulted in only relatively minor changes with respect to the spacing of high protection MPAs.

Feedback and discussion

There was substantial discussion about whether upwelling centers should be included in the size and spacing analysis. Package 1 exceeds the maximum spacing between upwelling centers because this package has an SMCA at Point Sur that is only in deep water and does not include the adjacent shallow waters that are most strongly affected by the Point Sur upwelling center. SAT members expressed that their original rationale for including upwelling centers as an important habitat was because of the effect of upwelling on shallow water ecosystems (<30m). Additionally, when the spacing guidelines were specified, SAT members imagined that they would be applied to MPAs that extended from the coast out to the limit of state waters. The MPF does not specifically deal with the depths at which upwelling center should be protected. Mary Yoklavich suggested that rockfish might be benefiting from upwelling effects, even in this deeper water SMCA, which starts at 50m depth. Other SAT members suggested that the primary impetus behind the spacing guidelines was to maximize the potential for exchange of individuals among similar habitats through larval dispersal. Representation of upwelling centers within the MPAs of the study region is important (though quantifying the boundaries of upwelling centers to get at total habitat area would be difficult), but spacing may be less relevant. The SAT decided to leave upwelling centers in the spacing analysis, accompanied by the caveats discussed above.

The SAT also decided to remove estuaries from the size analysis, because their small size precludes estuarine MPAs from meeting the size guidelines.

Loo Botsford's group has not had sufficient time to carry forward their analyses of network connectivity and population sustainability. Steve Gaines noted that he would make the point in his presentation that Loo's prior analyses were consistent with the ordering of packages based on Steve's size and spacing analysis. Where the packages differ is in the size distributions even as the spacing guidelines are met.

The SAT discussed how to present their evaluation results with respect to the issue of kelp leases. They agreed that the issue should be mentioned, but should not be a central focus of the presentations.

How packages address MLPA goal 3

Steve Palumbi gave an update on his analysis of the packages' relative performance in terms of replication (goal 3 emphasizes, among other things, enhancing opportunities for research). The replication results did not change much with the last round of modifications to the packages. Most of the packages meet the minimum guideline of three replicate MPAs. When you look at replication of specific habitat types, they meet this minimum very well for shallow habitats. But, they meet the guidelines barely or not at all for deeper habitats. An MPA was counted as a replicate of a particular habitat type only if it represented a significant portion of the total area (20%, 10%, or 5% depending on the rarity of the habitat). Persistent kelp patches were the only exception; these were always counted, even if there was only a small patch.

Feedback and discussion

Steve needs to redo the analysis for canyons because of a problem with how the data were coded. He will add Package AC to the analysis as well and put a line on the graphs to represent the SAT guideline.

Ecotrust analysis of potential commercial and recreational fishery impacts of packages

Astrid Scholz presented the results of Ecotrust's revised draft evaluation of potential negative impacts of the proposed MPA packages on commercial and recreational fisheries. This analysis does not compare the packages to a MPF guideline or goal as in the other analyses. The economic analysis was done for 19 fisheries for which EcoTrust collected data through interviews with fishermen.

Astrid noted that several patterns emerge from the analysis:

- Compared to the previous versions, packages 1, 2, and 3 are converging in terms of potential economic impacts: Package 1 now has 41% greater potential economic impacts, while packages 2 and 3 now have 13% and 4%, respectively, lesser potential impacts on commercial fisheries—both in terms of grounds and relative value (stated importance) in the study area;
- All packages potentiallyaffect the 19 commercial fisheries differently, with the smallest effects in terms of both value and area affected generally evidenced in Package 1;
- In the commercial fisheries, for 16 out of the 19 species investigated, Package 1 has the least effects on area and Package AC the most; packages S and 3 lie between packages 1 and 2 in 12 of the 19 fisheries;
- There are some deviations from this pattern in terms of the relative value of the affected areas, i.e., larger areas affected do not always correspond to higher stated importance;
- In the commercial fishery, for 18 out of the 19 species investigated, Package 1 has the least effects on the relative value and Package AC the most; packages S and 3 lie between 1 and 2 in 11 of the 19 fisheries;
- Package S, has the least impact on area for 2 of the fisheries, anchovy and white seabass, with comparable impacts to Package 1 for 8 of the fisheries, (anchovy, halibut, mackerel, salmon, sardine, white seabass, and squid);
- Package S, has less than 10% impact on the stated importance within the study area for 8 of the 19 commercial fisheries, compared to 12 for Package 1, 7 for Package 3, 2 for Package 2 (5 additional fisheries for Package 2 are between 10% - 11%), and 1 for Package AC.
- Packages have similar potential effects on the two recreational fisheries considered, with the package that affects the smallest area of grounds being the one that affects the least number of trips;
- Package 1, followed by Package S, affects the least amount of recreational fishing area and trips for both salmon and rockfish, with Package 2 having the largest effect on the

recreational fishing area and number of trips for salmon, while packages AC and 3 have the largest effect on the recreational fishing area and number of trips for rockfish.

Astrid and her staff are increasingly withdrawing from this process because it has become more and more politically charged. Their results will be put together by Steve Barrager and presented by Paul Reilly. There has been a push toward lumping the results and only presenting results for the "most important" fisheries. Ecotrust has turned over the data, but will not define what fisheries are important or what constitutes a significant impact, because these are fundamentally political decisions. Which years of recreational fishing data to use will also be a staff decision.

Feedback and discussion

The SAT will get a chance to see the revised presentation on potential fishery impacts before it goes to the BRTF. Staff will also circulate their revised analysis of goal 3.

The SAT noted that Elkhorn Slough, Lovers Point, Pinnacles, and Point Lobos stand out as areas of especially high recreational use. Elkhorn Slough and Point Lobos tend to be treated rather equally across packages, but there are differences among the packages in the Monterey area (especially around Lover's Point, the Breakwater and Pinnacles). Linwood Pendleton stressed that he wanted to make sure the BRTF is aware that the SAT specifically did not attempt to weight the relative strengths and weaknesses of the different configurations for the Monterey peninsula area because they felt that there was little difference among them with respect to the science-based design guidelines, and that weighing the various human uses for this area should be a policy decision.

Astrid noted that these are not hard and fast criteria and the effects are not evenly distributed. For example, while the potential effect of Package S on the spot prawn fishery is small, there would be a huge effect on the fishing grounds of one particular fisherman. How do we resolve that? Or do we leave it up to the policy makers? Future analyses of population sustainability (i.e., Loo Botsford's analysis) could shed light on the ecological benefits of MPA designs that result in particular economic impacts.

SAT members and staff discussed whether to present the analysis in terms of the proportions of the total fishing ground potentially impacted or proportions of the study region. Presenting the analysis in terms of the study region would be more comparable to the ecological analyses, while looking at the total fishing grounds might give the most accurate picture of the relative fishery impacts. One suggestion was to present the ratio of these two areas, flagging the fisheries that stand out as having particularly high or low ratios of study region area to total fishing ground area.

There was also substantial discussion about how to define the important fisheries. Potential considerations include: the proportion of the overall fishery contained within the study region, exports from the study region, and jobs supported by the fishery within the study region. In

general, SAT members were uncomfortable choosing which fisheries should be represented and were in favor of allowing the BRTF to choose which impacts are most important.

It was noted that these are first order effects, but that fishermen will change their behaviors in response to regulations, which may mitigate any impacts.

The results should be framed in terms of the policy choices the BRTF will have to make, which will be at the package level, rather than at the level of individual MPAs. Differences between packages are likely to come down to small differences. These small differences (often on politically charged topics) are likely to drive choices of which packages to forward. There was debate among SAT members about the level of resolution of information on potential fishery impacts that should be provided to the BRTF given the uncertainties and the unevenness in the data (e.g. should information on how the impact is spread among individuals be included?). It was suggested that available data be used when appropriate, but the MLPA does not require scientific data to be generated evenly across all topics.

Consideration of approval of draft executive summaries and conclusions of SAT sub-team evaluations

John Kirlin noted that updated versions of the executive summaries would be circulated after today's discussion, and staff will follow up with email and phone calls for final SAT approval.

There was much discussion about the form the SAT's feedback should take, whether it should rank the packages, and whether they should attempt an interdisciplinary analysis that looked at tradeoffs in terms of ecological benefits and economic costs. The SAT agreed that it was not appropriate for them to vote on preferred packages. They also agreed to focus the executive summaries primarily on the performance of the packages with respect to the goals of the MLPA and the CCRSG, rather than the MPF guidelines. Some members questioned whether results at the subregion level should be presented in the executive summaries.

The SAT approved the three executive summaries (goals 1 & 4, goals 2 & 6, and potential economic impacts). The SAT agreed to refer to the Ecotrust study as a fishery impacts study rather than an economic impacts study. Results for goal 3 were to be pulled out because staff produced a separate memo on goal 3.

Other suggested changes included:

- Explaining which goals were addressed and how the SAT measured performance relative to those goals at the start of each summary;
- Including a statement about water quality impacts and how they might affect MPA protection levels;
- Structuring the summaries in a way that allows easy comparison of the relative impacts of the different packages and helps to identify which packages are outliers, either positive or negative, with respect to the different goals;

- Highlighting the differences among packages and the places where each package meets or exceeds the guidelines;
- Giving the executive summaries a common structure;
- Having staff produce summaries for each package across the goals;
- Streamlining the summaries (fewer nuts and bolts);
- Including population sustainability analysis in future evaluations of size and spacing guidelines

Doyle Hanan expressed discomfort with the evaluation process because it is based on MPF design guidelines that he does not completely endorse.

Consideration of approval of suggested changes to the MLPA Master Plan Framework as proposed by peer reviewers and staff

Paul Reilly introduced suggested science-related changes to the MPF that came out of the independent peer review commissioned by DFG and the MLPA Initiative. Staff members have incorporated comments from this peer review into the document. Paul Reilly also presented proposed amendments to the document that have been suggested by the SAT evaluation sub-team aimed at explaining the levels of protection designations that were used in package evaluation. Paul asked the SAT for several references that were requested by the reviewers. There was some discussion about whether or not it was fair to revise the guidelines now, after packages have been submitted. Staff members emphasized that this is a living document and that all changes will be highlighted so that they will be clear to participants in the process moving forward.

Specific comments from SAT members on text revisions based on peer review:

- Change section 8 (Human activities ranges and MPA placement) to read, “In general, MPAs do not restrict transit.” There might be restrictions in some cases.
- Either drop or add to discussion in section 9 (Human activity patterns). The SAT recommended dropping all but the first and last sentences of the introductory paragraph.
- The description of how habitats were counted for the purpose of the spacing analysis was incorrect (section 5 under Consideration of habitats in the design of MPAs). Steve Gaines will revise.
- Check verb tense throughout. Should not be in past tense.

Additional comments from the SAT are due back to Paul Reilly by Monday.

Discussion of proposed amendments from SAT evaluation sub-team:

- Language from Ken Schiff about the effects of power plants and other impacts to water quality should be included (staff may have been working from an older version of the document before Ken’s language was incorporated).

- For future processes guidelines, replication of habitats across the study region should be incorporated in the bullet points at the bottom of page 2.
- It may not be appropriate to discuss the designations of MPA protection levels (e.g. high, moderate, low) in the MPF itself if the designations are considered an application of the guidelines.

Evaluation Summaries

The SAT evaluation sub-team presented a draft summary of the package evaluations. The document begins with text explicitly relating the guidelines and criteria used by the SAT when evaluating the MPA packages to the goals of the MLPA. In an effort to simplify the materials presented to the BRTF, the sub-team chose to focus on the matrices representing the habitats for which specific packages provide protection of 10% and 30% of available habitat of that type in the study region (assuming that habitat is distributed evenly). These percentages were calculated as follows: Taking the midpoint of the minimum MPA size guidelines (which are 3-6 miles) and the midpoint of the minimum spacing guidelines (which are 30-60 miles) provides an estimate of roughly 10% of available habitat. Similarly, taking the midpoint of the preferred MPA size guidelines (which are 6-12 miles) and the midpoint of spacing guidelines provides an estimate of 33% of available habitat. These numbers are meant to provide an estimate of the minimum and maximum area requiring protection by MPAs to meet the SAT guidelines. For a given habitat, a package may fall below the 10% guideline, meet the 10-30% range, or exceed the 30% guideline.

Using the criteria described above, the Evaluation sub-team developed a list of general comments that apply to all packages (under the scenario including existing kelp harvesting leases):

- All packages have increased conservation value over the existing MPAs.
- All packages meet the guidelines for minimum spacing for the majority of habitats (including consideration of high protection level MPAs).
    - The Point Buchon MPA in Package 3 deserves special consideration because it was misclassified by the SAT several weeks ago and therefore the package proponents are willing, but timewise were not able, to make the necessary adjustments to meet the proposed criteria.
- All packages meet the spacing guidelines.
- All packages meet at least the 10% guideline for moderate-to-high protection for all habitats.
- All packages provide moderate-to-high level protection for at least 20% of deep rock, deep sand, rocky intertidal, and estuarine habitats.
- All packages provide high level protection for at least 20% of rocky intertidal habitat.
- When 30% of the available habitat is protected at moderate-to-high protection levels, packages 2, AC and S represent more habitat types than packages 1 and 3. However, no package adequately meets this level of protection for all habitats.

- All packages provide high level protection to at least 30% of estuarine habitat.

The document will go on to evaluate if each package provides the levels of protection described above for 10% and 30% of each habitat type.

Feedback on the outline of the document included the following points:

- Use of the term "conservation value" should be avoided because "value" has a specific meaning in an economic context. "Conservation" could be replaced by relevant language that comes specifically from the MLPA.
- The following should be added to the general comments section: All packages provide protection and enhancement of non-consumptive use values in the study region.
- Verify that the language about the MLPA goals is accurate.
- In terms of presentation, the strengths of each package should be listed above weaknesses. Also, instead of using the terms "strengths" and "weaknesses" it might be more appropriate to talk about how each package doesn't meet, meets, or exceeds certain guidelines.
- The document should be structured to make presentation of habitat percentages, levels of protection, and other data more consistent throughout the document.

The revised document will be distributed to the SAT via email and final comments are due by Monday.

Wrap up

Michael DeLapa outlined the next steps for the SAT as being to review and edit final drafts of the executive summary and additional summaries focused on MLPA goals 1 and 4, goals 2 and 6, fisheries, and non-consumptive uses. In addition, MLPA Initiative staff will work with SAT members on March 13 to refine presentations for the March 14-15, 2006 BRTF meeting.

John Kirlin followed up by inviting all SAT members to attend the March 14-15, 2006 BRTF meeting. Agenda items for this meeting include presentations by the SAT evaluation sub-team, review of the adaptive management, monitoring, and evaluation document (led by Tegan Hoffmann), review of the management plan document, and the beginning of a discussion of other things that can be done to support implementation of the MLPA.

Future meetings include a joint meeting with the BRTF and California Fish and Game Commission on May 25, 2006 at which DFG will present its preferred alternative. A SAT member recommended that a few representatives of the SAT be invited to the meeting to explain the approaches the SAT took during the evaluations. An additional BRTF meeting will likely take place in early August 2006 with a focus on formally reviewing lessons learned during the central coast planning process.

Public Comment

One individual offered comment on the fact that much of the discussion throughout the meeting focused on the similarities between the packages, despite the significant differences between them. The speaker urged the SAT to let the differences show through when summarizing its evaluation of the packages. Additionally, lumping marine reserves and SMCAs with high protection may be useful, but can hide some of the benefits that can only come from marine reserves (e.g. pelagics, forage, and bait fish remain in the water; disturbance, bycatch, and uncertainty about the potential effects of fishing are all reduced).

Upcoming meetings

The next SAT meeting is scheduled for May 1, 2006 in San Jose and will focus on supporting DFG in its work on the packages and materials that will ultimately be forwarded to the F&GC.

Action Items

- Send comments on text revisions to the MPF design guidelines to Paul Reilly by Friday via email. A revised version will be sent to the SAT over the weekend.
    - Revisions by Steve Gaines for item #5 on page 11
    - Paul Reilly will revise all text to avoid using the past tense
- Send comments on amendments to the MPF design guidelines to Paul Reilly by Friday via email. A revised version will be sent to the SAT.
    - Revisions on the SMR section to be made by Mark, Rick S., and Mary.
- The evaluation sub-team will work with staff to create executive summaries and a combined executive summary and circulate to the SAT for review.